

Gotta Yoga

By Christina Darnell | Photography by Robert Lahser Posted: Monday, Sep. 05, 2011

Kim Zegil, owner of Gotta Yoga in Charlotte, is a firm believer in the benefits of yoga. When she opened up a studio in 2008, she wanted a place where yoga was for everybody, Kim says, “no exclusions.” This summer, she held teen yoga classes specifically geared toward student-athletes. It’s just one of the ways she is reaching out to the younger generations, teaching them to live healthy, balanced lives.

How did you discover your passion for yoga?

I started doing yoga after the birth of my second child. I walked into my first yoga class and I was hooked. My time on the mat was pretty much the only safe time in my head where I wasn’t so worried about home and what kind of mother I was or what kind of future I was going to have ahead of me. For me, it has been a huge mental refuge.

Why is it important to train student-athletes in stretching?

After 8 years of age, you start losing a lot of the natural flexibility, and that’s the same age that we as parents start hammering those year-round sports. It’s hard on their bodies. I think yoga helps with concentration, helping with focus and stress. We can start teaching our kids to care for their bodies so their performance is better, but also to care for their minds.

Do you plan to continue the initiative?

During the fall, I will blitz out again because our fall sports really kick in and all the different clubs. We hope to start getting these kids through the door.

Are you planning to work with coaches? Why?

Coaches don’t pull them through enough stretches for them to care for their growing and changing joints and bones. We want coaches to come in, so we can teach them different stretches that they can do with their teams. These are things you can do in your house or against a wall.

What has the response been like?

It’s been slow. I wonder if it is because most of our coaches are male, and males are generally the last people we see through our doors. But once they come through they are like, “Wow, this does make me feel better. This is helping me.”

To find out more about Gotta Yoga’s offerings for kids, tweens and teens, check out their website at <http://www.gottayogastudio.com/> 9539 Pinnacle Drive, Charlotte. 704-688-7256.